

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OUAGAD 01725 221722Z

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INFO AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

UNCLAS OUAGADOUGOU 1725

AFDROUGHT

EO 11652: NA

SUBJECT: UPPER VOLTA FOOD SITUATION

REF: A) OUAGA 1644 B) OUAGA 1673

1. AS REPORTED REFTELS A AND B, THE GOUV HAS TURNED ITS ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM OF LOW FOOD STOCKS AND SUPPLIES IN THE NORTHERN SAHEL ZONE AND VERY DIFFICULT TRUCK TRANSPORTATION. THE NEWLY NAMED DIRECTOR OF THE DROUGHT RELIEF SUB-COMMITTEE, LT. KABORE, TRAVELLED BY LIGHT PLANE THROUGH MANY OF THE CRITICAL NORTHERN AREAS AUG. 10TH WITH OSRO'S TREVOR PAGE AND DONOR REPRESENTATIVES. PRESENCE OF PAGE HAS BEEN IMPORTANT IN GALVANIZING GOUV CONCERN AND ACTION. US REPORTS OF FIELD DISTRIBUTION SITUATION HAVE ALSO BEEN MOST USEFUL.

2. SITUATION IN NORTH: GRAIN DELIVERIES TO MAJOR CENTERS, OUAHIGOYA, KONGOUSSI AND KAYA, BELOW THE 14TH PARALLEL ARE REGULAR AND SUFFICIENT (THE EXCEPTIONS BEING SEBBA SINCE IT IS SUPPLIED THROUGH DORI, AND BOGANDE AT THE END OF VERY POOR ROAD).

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 OUAGAD 01725 221722Z

ABOVE THIS LINE, INCLUDING THE CERCLES OF DJIBO

(83,600), ARIBINDA (25,000), GOROM-GOROM (67,500) AND DORI (131,000), DELIVERIES BY TRUCK HAVE BECOME VERY DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF THE BAD STATE OF THE ROADS. THE BETTER THAN AVERAGE (1930-1970) RAINFALL DURING THE MONTH OF JULY HAS BEEN VERY HARD ON AN ALREADY INADEQUATE ROAD SYSTEM: IN A NUMBER OF PLACES, BRIDGES AND PAVED FORDS ARE OUT AND SECTIONS OF THE ROAD HAVE BEEN CUT. THE WORST ROAD SECTIONS ARE KAYA-DORI-GOROM; OUAHIGOUYA-DJIBO-ARABINDA; DORI-SEBBA; KOUPELA-BOGANDE-BOULSA. DELIVERIES TO BUSIDIARY CENTERS (USUALLY SMALL TOWNS AND VILLAGES) HAVE VIRTUALLY STOPPED AND PEOPLE HAVE TO MAKE THEIR WAY MOSTLY ON FOOT TO THE MAJOR CENTER FOR DISTRIBUTIONS.

3. THE DIFFICULT AREAS AT THIS TIME ARE ARIBINDA, GOROM-GOROM, SEBBA AND BOGANDE. OUR FIELD MONITOR REPORTS THAT SEBBA HAS NOT HAD ANY VEHICLE IN OR OUT SINCE JUNE 5 SO THAT THE ACTUAL SITUATION THERE IS NOT KNOWN. (FIELD MONITOR WAGGONER WILL TRY TO GET TO BOGANDE, BOULSA AND SEBBA IN A 4-WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLE LATE THIS WEEK). THE OTHER CENTERS HAVE BEEN VISITED SEVERAL TIMES IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS BY VEHICLE AND PLANE AND ALL ARE KNOWN TO HAVE VERY LOW STOCKS OF GRAIN. DISTRIBUTIONS WERE HELD REGULARLY THROUGH JULY, THIS COUPLED WITH THE RAINS WHICH HAVE TURNED EVERYTHING LUSH AND GREEN MAKE A DECEIVING FIRST IMPRESSION. THE APPEARANCE OF THE PEOPLE AND THE AREA ARE NOT THOSE USUALLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE DROUGHT IN THE SAHEL. NONETHELESS, AT THIS TIME OVER 1,000,000 PEOPLE STILL DEPEND ON SOME DISTRIBUTION OF GRAIN. PRIOR TO JULY THERE WERE OTHER LOCAL SOURCES OF FOODS. FONIO, CRAM-CRAM AND THE ROOT OF THE WATER LILY ARE NOW FINISHED.

4. ROAD REPAIRS: THE EMBASSY HAS RECOMMENDED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR URGENT ROAD REPAIRS IN REFTEL B. PENDING REPAIRS, OSRO IS FUNDING TRANSHIPMENT AT POINTS WHERE ROADS ARE CUT: I.E., A MOVE OF UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 OUAGAD 01725 221722Z

FOOD FROM THE TRUCK AT SOUTHERN POINT TO OTHER TRUCKS AT THE NORTHERN POINT (APPROX DOLS 5,000).

5. OUAGADOUGOU STOCKS: PAGE AND KABORE HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING A SCHEDULE FOR EMERGENCY DELIVERIES FOR THE NORTH AND IN THE PROCESS HAVE REVIEWED FOOD RELIEF SUPPLIES AVAILABLE IN OUAGA. THESE RELIEF SUPPLIES WERE FOUND TO TOTAL LESS THAN 100 TONS OF

CEREALS. THIS IS A TEMPORARY SITUATION SINCE DONOR SHIPMENTS ARE ARRIVING REGULARLY. HOWEVER, TO MEET PRESENT NEED GOUV IS TRANSFERRING OFNACER STOCKS IN OUAGADOUGOU AND IN THE NORTH TO THE SOUS-COMITE, WHERE REQUIRED. OFNACER STOCKS OF US SORGHUM NOW ON HAND PROBABLY TOTAL CLOSE TO 5,000 TONS. IN ADDITION, OFNACER HAS A COMPARABLE AMOUNT OF CORN RECENTLY PURCHASED IN GHANA IN STOCK. THE ACTING MINISTER FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT. LT. KALMOGO, HAS ASSURED US THAT THE TRANSFER OF STOCKS FROM OFNACER WILL BE MADE JUDICOUSLY AND WITH CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THE PRICE STABILIZATION NEEDS IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY.
GRAHAM

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